

# Rubin Carter blames racists for imprisonment

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Rubin (Hurricane) Carter, once a leading contender for the mid-weight boxing crown, was convicted in 1966 (with a friend, John Artis) of three counts of murder, despite the testimony of six persons who placed him elsewhere at the time of a shooting in a Paterson, N.J., bar. Last year the *New York Times* investigated the case and, among other discrepancies, found that the prosecution's two key witnesses were now willing to recant their testimony. Carter was interviewed for *The Washington Star* in the Clinton, N.J., state prison by Charlie McCollum.

**Question:** Your original conviction has come under a lot of scrutiny and your case has been seized upon by a wide array of people seeking to free you. Are you confident that the original decision can be thrown out?

**Carter:** There was a decision made to get me by the powers, the people who are still the powers in this government. They convinced two people — Alfred Bello and Arthur Dexter Bradley — to say that they saw me in that bar. Both these men are in prison now, were in prison then. But, when they saw — later — that they too had been tricked, both of them said that they had lied on the witness stand. Now the powers have to come up with something new to keep me here. So, now they've come up with a third story, one that makes me look like the mastermind. They've come up with two witnesses — after nine years, mind you — who saw me and John Artis outside the bar at the time of the shooting. So, these people are still trying to keep me here and, because they are still in power, they could do it.

**Q:** What do you think is behind the effort to keep you in jail?

**A:** I'm not in jail for committing murder, let's start there. I'm in jail partly because I'm a black man in a country where the powers that be will allow a black man to be an entertainer or a criminal — period. . . . I was an entertainer, because I was a prize fighter. As long as I stayed within that role, I was acceptable to the powers. But when I didn't want to see my people brutalized anymore, all of a sudden, I was no longer acceptable. I must stress that I committed no crime. The crime was committed against me. All the evidence shows the crime was committed against me and is still being perpetrated against me.

**Q:** You've said you won't accept a pardon, right?

**A:** That's right.

**Q:** That's like an admission of guilt?

**A:** No; only that. I've been in this prison system because of a jury that was misinformed and did not have the proper information to reach an intelligent decision. Because they pronounced me guilty does not make me any more guilty than I know I am. I'm not going to allow this prison system or anybody in it to make me less of a father than I was; any less a husband than I was; any less a man than I was before I came here. I know I am not a criminal, and I know that the crime is of the community against me and I know I committed no crime. . . . All I want to do is work to be free. And get out of jail.

**Q:** But at one point you did seek clemency, didn't you?

**A:** My lawyers kept telling me that perhaps we could get you out on clemency to continue your fight in the courts. . . . But I did relinquish my position by applying for a position of clemency. Which hurt me. But yet, the only intelligent thing I can do to gain my freedom is do anything I can to get that freedom, so that was the projection of the fact. . . . When I heard an embellishment they were contriving (the new witnesses). I wrote them a letter to withdraw all of it, just take it all away, because I wanted a new trial. Every day that we remain in jail here — we are in jail — is a travesty of justice. Nobody wants to clean it up.

**Q:** Would your case have received this attention if you hadn't been a celebrity?

**A:** The fact that I was a celebrity, the fact that I was known, worked in reverse for me. Because when people said that I was a racist, or that I am a racist, when people said I was a mad Count Dracula — that information was spread wide. By the same token that I was known for prize fighting, that same notoriety was spread just as wide. So when I come to prison for nine years, nobody would listen.

**Q:** You mention racism. Hasn't this factor been cited by both sides of your controversy?

**A:** I grew up at a time and in a locality where racism didn't exist as far as I knew about it or as far as anybody else in that locality knew about it. I never knew what racism was. I grew up in a multi-racial situation. . . . When they taught me about the Constitution and freedoms and justice and opportunities, I thought they were talking about all of us, everybody that was sitting in the room. But the moment I became involved in this system, I found I was speaking one language and somebody

Being a man in society is hard. . . . But being a man behind these walls is doubly hard. I just happen to love my dignity and my humanity a little more than anything else. I'll do whatever's necessary. . . . I will not be governed by someone else's wants. I will be governed by my own needs. . . .

**Q:** Did you ever in the past nine years think I'm never going to get out of here? I'm never going to be free again?

**A:** Many times. I never said that. I never act that way. There were many times particularly when first coming here and everybody had bailed out, everybody had given up, everybody, except my wife and daughter, and my daughter was three years old at the time. . . . Many times I thought it. But I

knew if I keep on pushing. . . . If you don't know how to believe in yourself you don't know how to believe in anything else. It's fate. You make it happen. Things just don't happen by themselves.

**A:** How do you assess your chances?

**A:** Still the same as it always has been. You see, nothing has changed. Nothing. The only thing that has changed is the multitude of people who are waking up, as I said before. But nothing has changed in terms of the guilty verdict. The guilty verdict still stands. My triple life sentence still stands. I'm in prison. That still stands. Until I'm out, I can't even deal with tomorrow and the future. Because if I take my mind off the reality of what exists today I may not be here tomorrow.

## Another man with state ties on wanted list

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Leonard Peltier, added to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's 10 most wanted fugitives list Monday, became the fifth person with Wisconsin ties on the list.

Peltier was indicted Nov. 25 at Rapid City, S.D., in connection with the fatal shootings of two FBI agents. He also is sought on a federal warrant charging unlawful flight to avoid prosecution in an alleged 1972 murder attempt on a Milwaukee police officer.

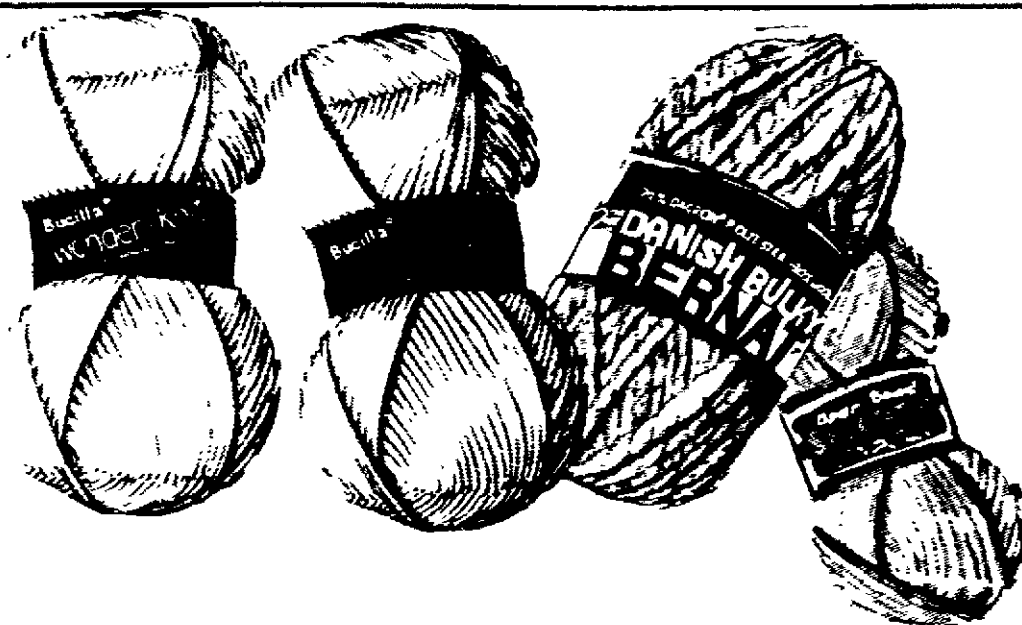
Peltier, 31, a Grand Forks, N.D., na-

tive and member of the American Indian Movement, is the only one of four persons sought in connection with the South Dakota shootings who remains at large. He also was indicted following an Oregon incident last November on nine counts of violating the National Firearms Act.

Others with Wisconsin ties on the FBI most wanted list are Dwight A. Armstrong, 24; Leo F. Burt, 27; David S. Fine, 23, and Benjamin Paddock, 49. Armstrong, Burt and Fine are sought in connection with a fatal 1970 bombing at the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison.

Paddock, a Sheboygan native, has been on the list since 1969 after escaping from federal custody. He had been serving a 20-year sentence for a bank robbery in Phoenix, Ariz.

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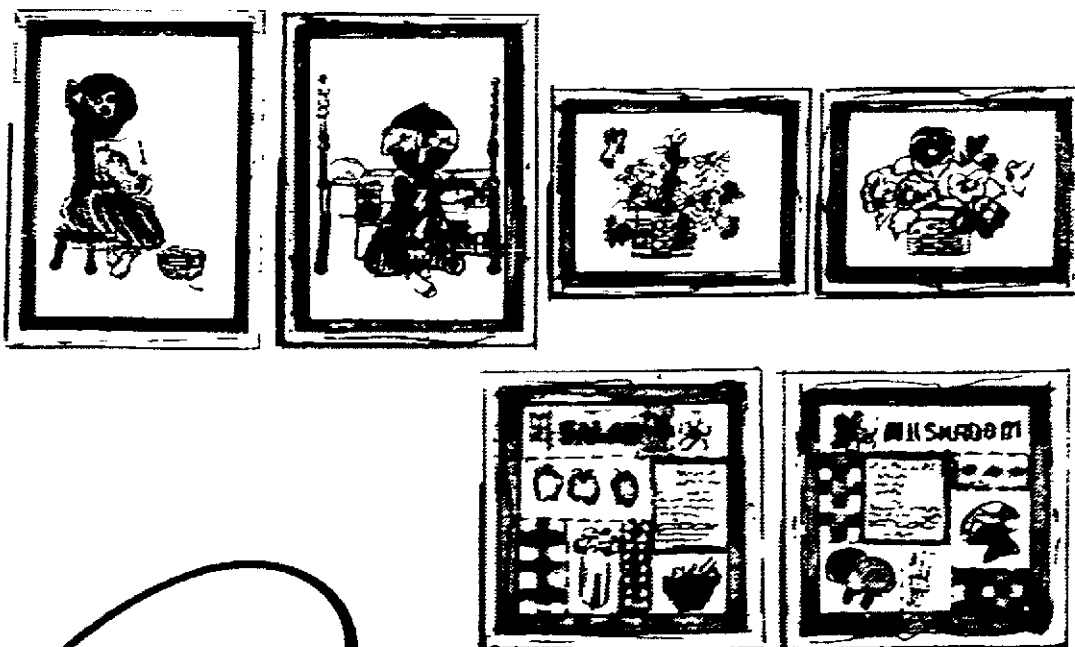


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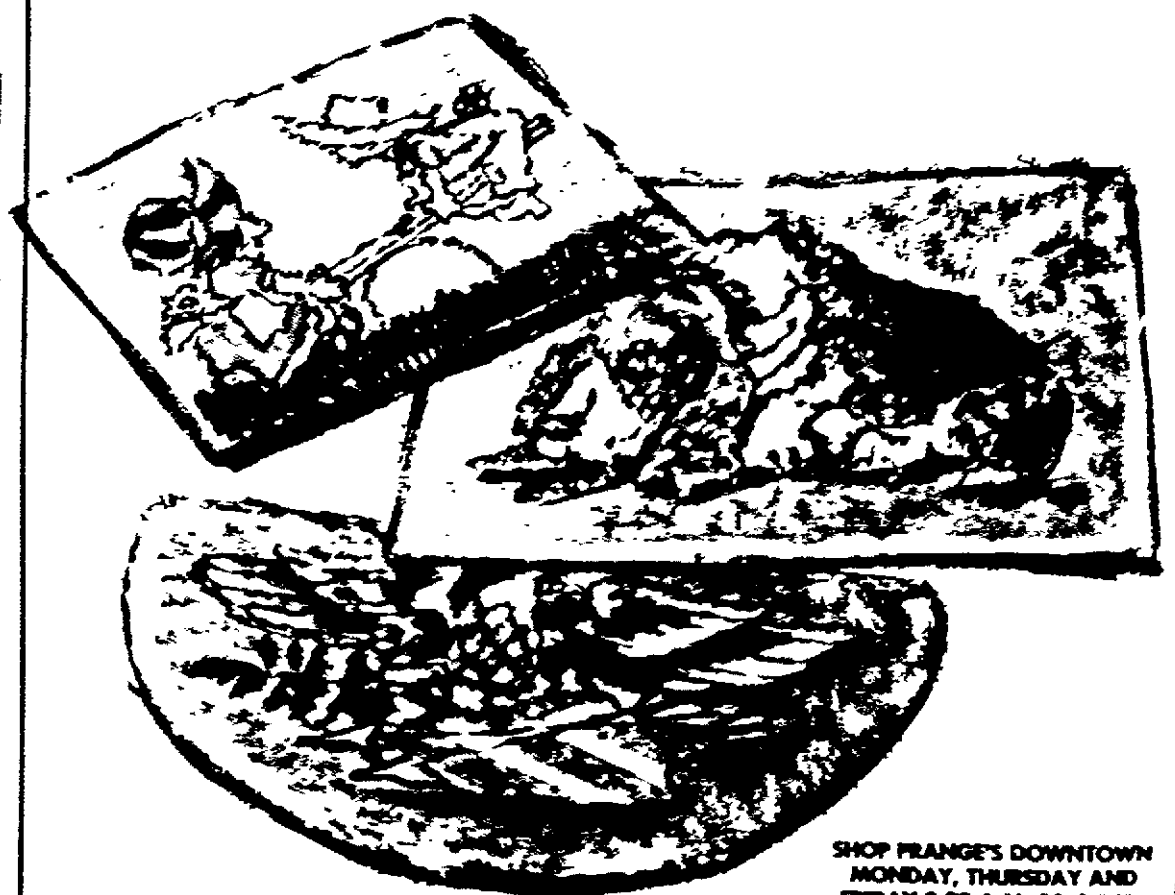
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